revised at regular intervals in consultation with the concerned State Governments;

(b) if so; the details thereof;

(c) whether some State Governments have asked for enhancement in royalty rates; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Royalty on crude oil and natural gas is notified by following the methodology finalised by Central Government in consultation with State Governments. As per this methodology, royalty on crude oil is payable at 20 per cent of the well-head price of crude oil. Upto 31.3.1998, under the Administered Pricing Mechanism for domestic Crude oil, price and royalty were fixed once in three years. After 1.4.1998, the domestic crude price has been linked to the international price of crude oil and the price and royalty are required to be fixed on monthly basis. As the international price of crude is very low at present, the same rate of royalty, which was being paid on 31.3.1998, has been continued.

Royalty on natural gas is payable at 10 per cent of its value at well-head.

Certain State Governments have asked for enhancement in the royalty rates. No decision has been taken as yet on this demand.

Allotment of LPG Agencies in Bihar

1198. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new LPG agencies allotted in Bihar during 1996-97 and 1997-98; and

(b) the target fixed for allotment of new LPG agencies in this State during 1997-98 and 1998-99?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) One LPG distributorship has been allotted in Bihar during 1996-97 and 1997-98.

(b) In addition to the locations pending from the' previous Marketing Plans, 88 new LPG distributorships have been included in the approved LPG Marketing Plan 1996-98 for Bihar. No target has been fixed for allotment of new LPG agencies for Bihar during 1997-98 and 1998-99. Actual allotment during this period will depend on various factors such as number of advertisements made, applications received, interviews held, selection of distributors and field investigation etc. made.

Gess on Diesel

1199. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the MINISTER OF PET ROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to levy a cess on diesel;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and by when the proposed levy is expected; and

(c) the rate at which the cess is to be levied and whether there would be additional cess to be levied on petroleum also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) There is no proposal with the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Hydrocarbon Exploration Programme

1200. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up programmes for the expansion of hydrocarbon during Ninth Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the fund allocation made thereon;

(d) the names of the public sector oil companies which are participating in hyd-rocarbon exploration; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) A statement is annexed *(See* below).

(c) Proposed Ninth Plan Outlays for exploration & production activities are as under:—

ONGC : Rs. 18927.18 crore OIL : Rs. 2672.42 crore

(d) and (e) ONGC and OIL are par ticipating in the Hydrocarbon exploration programme.

Statement

1. Oil and Natural Gas Commission

Activity	Unit	Proposed 9th Plan Target
2D Seismic Survey	GLK	42178
3D Seismic Survey	GLK	320598
Exploratory Drilling	WELLS	745
Development	WELLS	852
Oil Production	MMT	144.894
Gas Production	BCM	119.04
2. Oil India Limited		
2D Seismic Survey	SLKGLK	14300
3D Seismic Survey	Sq. Km.	1196
Exploratory Drilling	000' Mts	328.5
Development	000' Mts	457
Oil Production	MMT	16.460
Gas Production	BCM	11.56

GLK : Ground Line Kilometer
SLK : Standard Line Kilometer
MMT : Million tonnes
BCM : Billion Cubic Meter

Depressed Global Oil Market

1201. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Economic times, dated the 20th November, 1998 under the caption "depressed global oil market staggers off 12 year low"

(b) if so, the financial impact on India's foreign exchange expenditure on oil imports in the depressed market;

(c) whether huge gains have accrued to India;

(d) whether any effort has been made to reduce diesel and petrol prices in India; and

(e) if not, the reasons for not passing on the gains to consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The value of crude oil and petroleum products imported during 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 is as under:

Value: Rs/Crores

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*
Crude oil	11517.00	18538.19	15897.15
POL products	12577.85	15633.49	12431.92
TOTAL	24094.85	34171.68	28329.07

*Provisional.

The actual imports during ApriNSep-tember 1998 (Provisional) *vis-a-vis* the prorata original Oil Economy Budget (OEB) for the current financial year (Provisional) are as under:

	Actual (April-1998)*	Prorata OEB	1997-98* Sept.,
Quantity (MMT)	27.443	30.1095	53.093

*Provisional

(d) and (e) The Government had decided that the price of HSD would be on import parity basis and would be normally fixed on a monthly basis. In line with this decision, the ex-storage point price of HSD has been revised effective